MMR_0051 Norm Blackwood

Norm Blackwood at the controls of his "MASON DIXON" as snapped by "MR" Editor Linn Westcott.

Norm Blackwood's Mason Dixon is a large HO railroad taking up a little over a third of a 25 by 40 foot basement. In addition there is a double track main line that travels all the way around the basement walls, passing from room to room through the walls and uses the rear part of a large model railroad workbench for trackage rights. Tracks pass over the washtubs and actually go through the house beam support columns. Minimum radius is 36 inches.

The railroad derives its name from the Mason-Dixon line between Williams and Wildcat tunnels on the Penn-Central Railroad along the Susquehanna River. Norm loves building scenery and has had many wonderful hours of relaxation attempting to model those beautiful rock-cut tunnels.

Norm also is very interested in extra detailed custom painted locomotives and has had experience doing fellow model railroader's locomotives professionally for a number of years.

His first love, however, is the electrical or control end of model railroading. The Mason Dixon has an Automatic Block Connection system which makes train running a non-electrical experience. An "engineer" simply operates the cab throttle, directional switch and turn-out controls. Unlike P.C.C., the system will work on any layout configuration.

Norm is 45 years old and while his wife is not intersted in model railroading, she certainly supports his hobby efforts. He has three children, the eldest, a daughter, attending university. His elder son is an Eagle Scout and his younger son is busy with athletics and earning good marks in junior high school.

Norm works for the local power company and devotes the major part of his time to protective relaying, controls and automatic equipment at generating stations and sub-stations.